

# GVG NEWSLETTER

June 2014



## **We Have a Masterplan Vision!**

Guildford Borough Councillors are to be congratulated! Led by Cllr Stephen Mansbridge, they secured the services of much-respected masterplanners Allies & Morrison (A&M) to produce a Town Centre Vision which is now in the public domain. And A&M must also be applauded for the quality of their work, delivered under a tight budget and timescale. It's clear their team has been energised by the great benefits Guildford can enjoy from adopting a very professional, visionary masterplan.

This is the start of the masterplanning process that GVG has been arguing for. You can see the exciting and stimulating A&M Vision on our website [www.guildfordvisiongroup.com](http://www.guildfordvisiongroup.com). GBC says that the Vision will become a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), thus giving it teeth in future planning. This is a crucial step and, by so doing, the councillors have shown their determination to see tangible progress from Vision to Plan. We will be offering our support to the Council, councillors and officers alike, as they work to turn the Vision into a dynamic project to deliver Guildford a stunning future.

## **Councillors Need All Your Support For Next Steps**

The next steps have to be bold if the Vision is to find its way confidently into a delivered plan. Councillors and officers will need all our support and encouragement to establish the right planning environment if the Vision is to be refined and delivered successfully. This is certainly not the time for a wobble! We must support them as they have to confront and manage ad hoc planning applications that might frustrate the Vision becoming reality. The Vision has to chime with the Local Plan and vice versa. It's important the Local Plan makes land reservations where appropriate so the Vision can

move more easily to the considerable project that will deliver a winning town.

## **We Need Your Feedback**

Please do study the Vision and tell us what you like, or don't like about it. Remember it is a vision, that eventually must become a reality that can be delivered. So what can you see working and what seems impracticable or unlikely to be delivered over a 20-year horizon? There will be a formal consultation eventually as part of the SPD process (and it will also be referenced in the new Local Plan). But before then we will want to shape and refine it more, especially around road routes and the gyratory, if we are to successfully pedestrianise the centre of town. So please email us your views to

[action@guildfordvisiongroup.com](mailto:action@guildfordvisiongroup.com)

## **We Need a New Bridge!**

We quite understand that A&M have taken a 20+ year view on traffic. Their Vision is built around the premise that our travel habits and transport options will have shifted considerably to more sustainable forms of movement (Arup's Golden Thread aka the Green Snake is a first attempt). We support that contention but believe that the current level of development really must look at other options in the meantime.

Hence our wish to see a new bridge across the railway and River Wey, linking Guildford Park with Woodbridge Road. It offers a practical way of pedestrianising the route from the station to the town centre within the next 5-10 years. It takes through traffic out of the centre of town, including HGVs (but without re-routing them through eg Compton).

We support any plan that delivers a safe and uninterrupted passage of people between the station and the principal retail areas of the town and visitor attractions such as the Castle.

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## **Other New Bridge Benefits**

There is only one East-West railway crossing in the centre of town, the Farnham Road bridge. It was built before the advent of the motor car. If Surrey University is successful in building 2,000 new homes at Blackwell Farm, many extra cars and other traffic will have to use the only rail crossing in the centre of town, certainly if they want to get to Waitrose! A new bridge will spread the load (and allow for the eventual renewal of Farnham Road bridge, as must surely happen).

## **North Street and Other Key Developments**

The Masterplan embraces the development of North Street and other key town centre developments in prospect. These include the station. Without a cohesive masterplan, there's a risk of piecemeal development with elements clashing or co-ordinating poorly. We must support GBC as they wrestle with difficult decisions. We need a comprehensive masterplan that allocates retail, commercial and housing space. We believe the next stage of masterplanning must extend to include key social and economic centres of activity - the University, Research Park, Hospital and Cathedral, for example. This will ensure the plan from the Vision brings attractive synergies.

## **Brownfield is Best!**

Masterplanning allows sensible site allocation in and around our town. One example is Walnut Tree Close. It cries out to be a well-planned, sustainable, residential area providing homes for young professionals in a riverside setting. (The flooding risk can be managed through good design). This brownfield site would relieve pressure on the Green Belt and provide extra stimulus to the town's evening and night time economies. With the station in walking distance, car usage should be much reduced.

## **Your Views are Important for the Local Plan As Well!**

You may also want to feed your views in GBC's Local Plan consultation starting on 1 July for 12 weeks. It's important the Local Plan makes land reservations for key elements of the Vision.

## **About Guildford Vision Group**

New to Guildford Vision Group? Go to [www.guildfordvisiongroup.com](http://www.guildfordvisiongroup.com) for background information about our two year campaign.